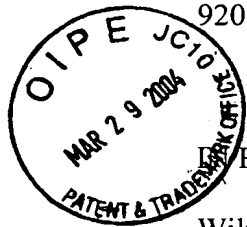


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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

BEFORE THE APPLICATION OF:

Wilmert De Bosscher et al.

Serial No: 09/720,744

Filed: June 11, 2001

FOR: Vacuum Tight Coupling for Tube Sections

) Examiner: Aaron M. Dunwoody

) Group Art Unit: 3679

) Customer number: 23644

) I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited
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Name of person signing Jennifer J. Ramirez
Signature _____

PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME

Honorable Director of Patents and Trademarks
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

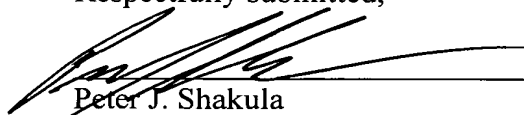
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In accordance with the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §1.136, the applicant hereby petitions for an automatic extension of time of 1 month to respond to the Office Action of November 25, 2003. Response will therefore be timely if filed with the Patent and Trademark Office no later than March 25, 2004.

In accordance with the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §1.17, the required fee of \$110 is attached hereto.

March 25, 2004

Respectfully submitted,


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